

DeFazio secures funding for Hydration Technologies, Inc., armed forces center expansion; supports increased funding for veterans

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WASHINGTON, DC—U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio today voted for legislation that would increase funding for veterans' health care programs. The bill, H.R. 5385, also included funding DeFazio secured for Hydration Technologies, Inc., in Albany, OR, and for an expansion of the Oregon National Guard's headquarters in Salem. "I supported this bill because veterans' programs need increased funding," DeFazio said. "Today's legislation increases funding for veterans' medical services by 12 percent, with \$2.8 billion specifically for mental health care. However, more will be needed to fulfill the promises we've made to our vets."

DeFazio supported efforts to provide an additional \$1.8 billion to meet the health care needs of veterans. This funding would have been offset by scaling back tax cuts for millionaires by \$5,000, still leaving them with a \$109,000 tax cut. However, this amendment was blocked by the Republican leadership.

"It's a sad day when Congress puts tax cuts for millionaires over the health care needs of those who protect and serve this country," DeFazio said. "The administration and the Republican leadership have the wrong priorities. Our veterans deserve better."

DeFazio secured \$2.5 million for the research and development of a water filtering device for use by the U.S. military at Albany-based Hydration Technologies. Last year, DeFazio secured \$2.1 million for the Forward Osmosis Downed Pilot Hydration System, which will allow pilots and crew to filter any water source to produce a safe drinking solution. This project will increase survivability not only for aircrews in the military, but for others in dire situations.

"Providing safe, drinkable water for U.S. troops in remote areas is an ongoing challenge for the military," DeFazio said. "Most effective filtration systems are cumbersome and expensive. Albany's Hydration Technologies, Inc. has found a safe, easy and affordable way to produce consumable fluids from a contaminated water source. This technology will be invaluable to the U.S. military and has potential for civilian application in emergency relief situations."

The bill also included \$749,000 to plan and design an expansion of the Oregon National Guard's Joint Forces Headquarters in Salem. DeFazio, along with other members of the Oregon delegation, requested the money this year.

“As the U.S. military enhances the role of the National Guard, and increases the responsibilities and burdens placed on these citizen-soldiers, the federal government has a responsibility to provide additional resources so the National Guard can successfully carry out their mission,” DeFazio said.

Since the headquarters was constructed in 1991, staffing has increased by almost 40 percent. Three-quarters of the classroom space has been converted to office space due to demands placed on the headquarters by the National Guard Bureau. The funding will help ensure the Oregon National Guard can effectively fulfill their state and national missions.

Companion legislation must now be approved by the Senate.